1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

175 642 631 634 tendency for these two titles to be passed on down the male line. Even in this latter case, however, the king could always choose those most likely to be totally loyal to his administration from among the heirs, or even disregard the hereditary rule if he wished and give the title to some other person. The four quadrant leaders also had their own fiefs which they used as the basic support for their large household organizations in the capital.

175 648 Vassal groups and territories paid tribute in kind through their leaders to the treasury of the Mai of Bornu. In the heyday of Bornu during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries these vassals included a large number of surrounding peoples in what is now Northern Nigeria, Niger, and Chad. These subordinate groups were organized in two ways. In the first instance a Bornu consul was appointed to reside in the tributary state to help collect annual tributes and administer the government. This was in effect a kind of conquest and occupation used most often in adjacent and nearby territories. The second method was to leave the territory under the control of its own leaders after they had pledged their loyalty and their intention to pay tributes and give military support to Bornu whenever necessary; they were also expected to provide safety and hospitality to expeditions and caravans going to and from Bornu. Some of these vassal states were caught between two great powers. Such a case were the Hausa of northwestern Nigeria. Caught as they were between Songhai to the west and Bornu to the east they, therefore, paid tributes in two directions, always hoping that someday they could be relieved of these burdens by an increase in their own power or a decrease in the power of one or both of their overlords. Indeed Bornu traditions and written records are almost totally concerned with expeditions against reluctant tributaries who were remiss in the payment of their tributes. On the other hand, there are also accounts of tributary states sending to Bornu for help against external enemies and internal revolts; so the relationship could, and often did, work to the advantage of both the conqueror and the conquered.

175 793 692 The religious and legal life of the state was strongly influenced by the specialized religious practitioners who were steeped in the Koran and Islamic jurisprudence. The chief judge and religious leader of early Bornu was given the title of Talba and is referred to in traditions as "second to the king," or the next in authority to the monarch himself. He and his descendants and client followers knew the Arabic script and thus made up a literate group closely associated with political leaders as scribes, legal advisers and religious functionaries. These men sat in on judicial hearings and advised political leaders who adjudicated on the basis of their own knowledge of the law. Besides the Mai, most noble households kept such religious men within their compounds for similar purposes, and as instructors for the children. Under such conditions the religious leaders were also strong supporters of the state and its power structure.

175 651 Little is known of the details of taxation for the early Bornu kingdom although records are much better for the nineteenth century system. Obviously some form of tax was levied on local fiefs by fief-holders as well as by the monarch who also received tributes from vassal states and a major portion of booty from warfare. As we have already noted, it is fairly evident that royal taxation of the Bornu population itself was carried on through the efforts of the monarch's titled followers who held powers of royal taxation privilege in the four quadrants of the state.

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

ma, who when he was in court, sat in front of the throne facing the same way as the Shehu between the two lines. This symbolized his semi-independent status as a holder of a large section of the kingdom rather than a set of fragmented fiefs. Thus the idea of a consolidated set of fief-holdings on the western boundary was maintained. There was a constant threat from the Fulani which made such a move politically expedient.

How much actual power this nineteenth-century court actually had is debatable. Obviously a few favorite advisers who had the ear of the monarch could become very powerful men during the period of their favor. However, who these were seems to have varied throughout the century. Indeed even a place in court might be gained by a very ambitious rural chief, if he appeared often enough and was able to please the monarch by his service and tributes. In the realm of the judiciary some significant changes occurred as well. Before the nineteenth century, as we have already noted, there was a chief judge, the Talba, who was ranked as "the second man" in the state. During the double regency at the beginning of the century, the first Shehu, Laminu, acted as his own chief judge. He was steeped in Koranic learning and is supposed to have had magical powers that enabled him to adjudicate even the most difficult of cases, harshly but with justice. Parenthetically, this power—and not his military acumen and leadership—is considered by the traditions to have been the chief reason why Laminu saved Bornu from the Fulani wars. Later in his rule, sometime in the 1820s, Shehu Laminu appointed two leading religious personages who came from the families of the leading Bornu religious practitioners to the new offices of Liman and Imam. The former took over the major duties of chief legal adviser to the Shehu, while the Imam became the chief religious practitioner in the state. The old Talba stayed with the court of the former dynasty, and after its demise the title became a lesser one in the judicial hierarchy which is where it stands today.

Punishments for misdemeanors were relatively harsh by contempory standards. Adultery on a Muslim holy day could bring 400 lashes to a man or 200 to a woman. It was believed that judges in the capital of Kuka actually set spies upon the populace in search of law breakers. Intentional murder was punishable by death, and the relatives of the dead man carried out the execution by stoning the murderer. Thieves who were repeatedly caught finally had a hand cut off or were tortured by being buried up to the neck, then having their heads buttered or honeyed and exposed above the ground to attract insects. Unpaid debts proven in court resulted in the confiscation of all the debtor's movable property and a fine to the court. The debtor was pinned to the ground by court officials until he consented to confiscation. However, if he obviously had no means at all, the judge dismissed the case with the words, "God send you the means."

All titled officials and even untitled followers of the Shehu could be given or they could inherit, at the pleasure of the Shehu, rights of revenue collection and administration in one or more settlements spread throughout the entire state. These fiefs were granted by the Shehu, nominal owner of all the land in the state. Generally speaking such rights were hereditary in the male line, but the Shehu could diminish or expand the holding of one fief-holder at the expense of another, and a new monarch was expected to patronize his own favorites. Any person holding a fief directly from the monarch was called a chima kura or "the big lord." There

782 embrace Islam pronounce.

The second is ritual prayer. Ritual prayer (Sallah) occurs five times each day at the following times:

Sua (Ar. Asuba)	5 AM (time of arising)
Duar (Ar. Azahar)	2 PM
Asar (Ar. al-Asar)	4 PM
Magəribu (Ar. Magriba)	6:30-7 PM (sunset)
Lasha (Lishai)	10 PM (bedtime)

Generally this observance is strictly followed by all Kanuri. Prayer is an individual matter, and can take place wherever the individual happens to be. The Friday afternoon prayer tends to be communal in character, and people go to mosques to pray. Everyday prayers are not customarily carried out in the
• 793 mosque. The religious hierarchy is only peripherally involved in the ritual prayer. The Ladan announces the times for prayer by public calling; the Imam (Liman) leads prayers in the mosque on Fridays and on religious holidays.

785 The third Pillar is fasting. During the lunar month of Ramadan all adult Kanuri fast from sunrise to sunset. This is rigidly observed by all, and it would be exceedingly shameful to be seen breaking the fast. The first sighting of the new moon is announced by the Shehu and the news rapidly spreads throughout Bornu that the month of Ramadan has come to an end. The end of fasting is marked by widespread festivities.

782 The fourth Pillar is the giving of alms. There are two types of alms in Islam: the zakat or tithe which all Moslems are expected to give to support the church, and sadaka, or vol-

782 untary alms. Zakat, the tithe for the church, is not given
• [793] by the Kanuri. Consequently the clergy are dependent entirely
[792] on sadaka. Koranic specialists who devote themselves entirely to study of the Koran, and to the teaching of the Koran are called Malams. The Malams are supported by sadaka which devout Kanuri are expected to give.

788 The fifth and last Pillar of Islam is the pilgrimage.
177 All who can manage the pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj) without hardship are expected at some time to make this trip. The Mais and Shehus undertook the pilgrimage, and in fact, el Kanemi spent some years in Mecca. Large numbers of the Kanuri populace have also made the pilgrimage. Its effect has been to tie Kanuri society to the larger world of Islam, in that way to share in a larger community and to bring back to Bornu new ideas and new products. Pilgrims who travel across the width of Africa by truck from Lake Chad to the Red Sea, find that they have a common bond with other Moslems in the towns through which they pass.

78 The nature of religious observance among the Kanuri can be
182 seen in their adherence to the Pillars of Islam. But Islam
[576] enters into Kanuri life at numerous additional points: in the
[273] common greetings between two individuals when they meet; in the
[262] abstention from any form of alcoholic beverage which tends to
[772] be widely observed; in food taboos; in Koranic charms which most
[757] individuals wear; and in the use of ink from verses of the Koran
796 as cures for illness. Most life crises are marked by religious

[GEIDAM]

1. Religious specialists.

792 The prototype of the religious specialist is the Malam. 872 875 As noted earlier, anyone who has studied the Koran is referred [463] to as a Malam. There are only thirty or forty Malams in Gei- [462] dam, however, who devote themselves solely to Koranic studies and to the traditional role of teachers of the young. These full-time Koranic Malams have pupils living with them in their compounds, many sent into Geidam from the small surrounding [876] villages where there are no Malams. Others, children of Geidam residents, are sent each day to the Malam, where they are taught prayers and where they repeat in group chants sections [292] of the Koran read to them by the Malam. Young pupils of a Malam [735] are distinguished by their garb: they wear goatskins over one shoulder and carry a begging bowl. Every evening, after the evening meal, they appear on the streets begging for their Malam in the name of Allah.

792 The title of Gonyi is given to very learned Malams, who [554] have learned the entire Koran by heart. There are very few 793 Gonyis in Geidam. In addition to the Malams and Gonyis, there are three religious specialists who occupy distinct statuses which are given recognition by the traditional political author- [693] ities. These are: the Alkali, and the two Imams. The role of Alkali is concerned with law and political organization as well as with religious practice, and has already been discussed in [192] connection with political organization. The role of Imam (the word Liman is used in Kanuri; from the Arabic al-imam) is solely a religious role, but it receives political recognition.

793 a religious role, but it receives political recognition. There are two Limans in Geidam. One Liman leads prayers on religious holidays, and is called Liman Noumeribe (ngumeri means religious festival); the other leads the communal Friday prayers and is called Liman Zemabe (Zema means Friday). The Liman Ngumeribe conducts prayers twice each year, at the two most important [782] festivals. When Yerima Mustapha became Ajia of Geidam, he instituted the practice of public communal prayers on the dandal each [804] Friday. This is frequently--though not always--done in Kanuri towns, and had not been the customary practice in Geidam when 793 Kaigama had been Ajia. Yerima made inquiries as to who was con- 634 sidered the most respected Malam in Geidam, and appointed that 297 Malam as the Liman Zemabe of Geidam. The new Liman Zemabe was 554 given a kulugu and a burnoose as marks of office. Though the Liman Ngumeribe had previously held his office under Kaigama, Yerima also gave him a kulugu and a burnoose when he came to Geidam.

2. Religious Festivals.

796 The month of Ramadan (April 2 to May 1, in 1957) is spent 785 in fasting. During that time neither food nor water is taken 183 into the mouth from sunrise to sunset. All Kanuri above the [561] age of fifteen or sixteen keep the fast. For several years before that boys and girls keep a modified fast, in which three days of fasting are followed by nine days in which the fast is not observed. In Geidam all Kanuri outwardly keep the fast, al-

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565 orces can be made of them, since they more often feel compelled to return to the partial seclusion of their luwali's compound, especially during their younger years. Consequently, those in higher ranks not only command higher prices for the girls they dispense, both materially and in terms of social obligations, but get more chance to dispense the same girl, given the high divorce rate. The lower class girl very often wants much more freedom in her marriage choices after her first divorce than the high ranking woman. Thus class differences make for a higher proportion of "investment material" (i.e. dispensable women) for creating obligations where they are needed most, among the upper ranks of society. It should also be remembered that upper class households tend to be larger and thus in both absolute numerical as well as in terms of more utilization being made of the same girl, the high status individual can obtain "higher returns" (more obligations and relationships) from his rights of dispensation.

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793 Nyia sada'abe - marriage of charity or gift marriage[1] is similar in many respects to the foregoing except that the person receiving the girl or young woman (more often a virgin girl) is always a mallam (Koranic teacher-priest). Informants claim that such a marriage is considered to be a charitable act (sada'a) and confers honour upon the
582 donor. In such cases much, if not all, of the gift giving by the male
793 to the girl and her kin before the marriage is waived, except that in
583 connection with the formalizing ceremony on the day of marriage. To what extent the bridewealth is excluded varies from case to case depending upon the wealth or poverty, and power of the mallam in question, and

(1) c.f. Ellison, R.E. op. cit. He calls this nyia mallambe - a marriage with a mallam. This expression was heard, although informants preferred the term used here.

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793 the motivations of the luwali in giving his ward. It may be that the
583 mallam is attached to a large household organization. Then the marriage
[557] very closely resembles the previous type, except that the marriage payments to the girl's kin are reduced or waived because of the cultural definition of such a marriage as a charitable act by the wife-giver.

581 Again, a man may wish to express his gratitude to a mallam
582 for supernatural aid in which the mallam utilized his special skills.
793 This can result from medical aid, divination, or charms provided by the mallam. On the other hand, most individuals would be quite hesitant about refusing the request of a mallam for a girl, if such were made, because of the general awe in which he and his avowed supernatural powers are held in the public eye. For the same reason there is some anxiety connected to the giving of a girl to a mallam, for if anything should go wrong with the marriage and produce dissatisfaction on the part of the mallam, his powers of retaliation are very great.

582 This does not mean that mallams themselves receive all their
793 wives through charity. One informant of about thirty years of age was a peasant mallam, who farmed and lived in Magumeri. He wrote charms for people, and officiated in a minor way at the ceremonies in his immediate ward of town. He had been married six times, almost always to one wife at a time, with the exception of about a one year period when he had two wives in his compound. Of these six marriages only one had been a nyia sada'abe (a gift marriage). He said that he preferred to obtain his wives like any other man, then he would owe no one any special obligations.

58 Nyia ardiabe (marriage by agreement) refers to marriages where the man and woman involved have a strong desire to marry one ano-

On the Friday within the eight-day period, or several days before this if the child is born on a Friday, two or three kola nuts are sent to the males of the town who are friends and relatives of the household, as well as to important persons of the immediate area. This serves as an announcement of the birth of a new member to the household, and as an invitation to the naming ceremony which takes place on the eighth day after birth.

The Naming

On the morning of the eighth day after birth the formal naming ceremony (su) takes place. As to all public gatherings, men and women come and go separately. The women, bringing food and flour, arrive in single file, senior women in front of junior in rank, and pass, eyes downcast, into the compound to the women's section. The ground millet flour allows the young wife to cook for her husband during the next few weeks without going through the arduous task of grinding millet. The women sit out in front of the hut of the mother chatting gaily and colouring their teeth, while the mother remains in her hut. The barber arrives to cut the face marks and remove the uvula of the child.

In front of the compound the men sit on either side of the entrance hut. On the left side (as you come out of the compound) a senior mallam, other mallams, and mallams-in-training, read the entire Koran by passing out several pages to each of the literates who have come for this purpose. On the right hand side of the entrance hut the men of the household sit on mats in order of seniority, with close friends or high status persons waiting patiently for the reading to finish and the name to be announced. All males usually contribute some money (two to five shillings varying up to one pound for high status visitors) as a token of friendship. The

868 are transgressed.

868 Learning of adult skills is often accomplished through
857 imitative play. A little girl of three and a half was passed a straw plate and, separately, some paper clips. She immediately put the paper clips on the plate as her mother would do in the preparation of food, and began her own approximation of the quick, deft, jiggling movement of sifting the shells of groundnuts. None of the paper-clips was dropped from the plate and she soon passed the plate back saying, "Here are some groundnuts."

857 Sometimes imitative play is more organized. A large group
867 of children between the age of six to ten may organize a "wedding". One of the young boys is the groom and a bride is chosen, as are in-
[864] laws, best man, lead woman, etc. Every detail of the adult virgin marriage ceremony is carried out, even to a mock impregnation, in this case a small doll. The wedding foods, in miniature, are passed around to the proper people, who accept the mock food with a show of seriousness. Adults thought this play was instructive and remarked that it was a good way for the children to learn the customs of the people.

794 Childhood is also the time of basic religious instruction
• 793 which is more highly stressed for boys. Young boys may be given away any time after the age of six or seven to a Koranic mallam for a year or two, to live and travel with him, work for him, and live in abject poverty, in order to learn Arabic prayers, and some Arabic script. Their relationship to him while under his tutelage is expressed in the Kanuri saying "mallamnun abanun kozina" (your mallam exceeds your father). In other words, an individual's Koranic teacher exceeds his father in fatherly qualities, which means he must be given respect, obeyed and sub-

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793 mitted to as a superior whose authority is unquestioned. In other cases, mallams near at hand or in the compound take up the job and the
871 child is not forced to leave home. Today there is the added possibility of receiving religious instruction in the government schools. However, this is still rare in rural areas.

591 By the age of ten or twelve years, a young Kanuri boy may have lived in quite a number of households. One informant related how he was adopted by his grandfather at weaning, given to a wandering mallam at the age of six, entered Junior Primary School as a boarder at nine, and entered the service of a District Head at the age of thirteen. This is not an extreme case, especially when the high rate of divorce is considered. Thus a young boy or girl, especially the former, can find himself in one to five or more different households or primary
591 group settings by the time he has reached early adolescence. It may
571 be proper here to ask who is the authority figure in the young child's life; who is it that in his person embodies or symbolizes authority? And the answer is of fundamental importance —— no one. The Kanuri child learns, whether he lives in one compound or many, that his society is a system of ranked hierarchies in which there are many people to whom he must give respect and subordination.

Puberty

561 By the end of childhood, as the Kanuri define it (which means somewhere between the ages of nine to thirteen), the sex roles and many of their accompanying behaviours have been established. From this period onward the development towards adult status is sharply dif-
881 ferentiated for males and females. Somewhere around puberty a young
532 girl is given in virgin marriage by her father or the person who has been designated as having the power of marriage dispensation over her. Male

563 829 who descended from the north on settled towns and caravans for plunder and slaves. Even today they are feared for their aggressive and warlike ways. The pagan groups who are most contacted, the Banana and the Gwoza peoples, many of whom live as a despised minority among the Kanuri, are rated the lowest among the non-Muslim groups. While those peoples who have many recent converts to Islam, like the Babur or the Yoruba, are rated much higher than the less contacted pagan peoples like the Mandara, Magari and Tiv, who are in their turn rated higher than the more closely contacted Gwoza and Banana.

Occupation

554 The occupational role which a person performs is a major determinant of status in the total society. Traditionally, as well as contemporaneously, any person holding a political position is accorded a high status in relation to all other occupations. The higher the political position in the governmental hierarchy, the higher the 554 567 status accorded the person doing the job. Thus the status of a slave, for example, is strongly dependent upon his occupation. In Magumeri a slave of the District Head, who gives the District Head free labour and has no political ties or power, has a very low status. On the other hand, the District Head considers himself the slave of the son of a former Shehu, because his father was a slave of the former Shehu. The District Head's status in the society as a whole is high because of his occupation as a District Head, notwithstanding his slave background.

555 793 Koranic mallams are accorded prestige because of their close connection to the supernatural which gives them specialized powers, and because of the leading role they take in rites de passage. The variation in their status is due to their success (see below pp. 225-228, arziyi) and their birth.

793 228, arsiyi) and their birth. There are mallams who form part of the [565] highest ranking status group in the state as well as peasant and beggar mallams. Each political leader of any size has his own mallams [693] attached to his organization, as do many powerful men. Since Koranic knowledge is also legal knowledge the judiciary is a specialized, high status sub-group of mallams.

556 Beneath the political and religious occupations lie the [565] broad base of peasant or commoner roles, which are differentiated [441] primarily on the basis of material success. Among these occupations it was observed that the role of wealthy trader obtained the highest status. This is due to its being the most lucrative in comparison to all other non-political occupations. Traditionally, the occupation of 554 829 butcher, blacksmith, tanner, petty broker, and barber are accorded shame (nungu) status in relation to other positions, while drummer-entertainers are also considered low status people who have no proper sense of dignity.

Informants defined shame status of occupations by whether or not it would be shameful for a "decent" free person whose father was a mallam or a political leader to take up the job, aside from reasons of economic necessity (kwansako) which (allegedly) excuses the role occupant from shame. The reasons given for shame (nungu) occupations are as follows: (1)

[826] (a) butcher - he cuts animals, mallams who do this are bad mallams; he takes life for money; he smells of blood (the Kanuri equate blood closely with life, soul and personal power).

(b) blacksmith - they made arms for the enemies of the Prophet.

(c) tanner - they smell badly; their work smells unpleasantly; only a man with no proper shame could do such work.

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(1) Composite statement from informants.

643 The Shehu is 256.
793 also the formal leader of the religious community of the state. This
796 is embodied in his title "Commander of the Faithful", and is expressed ritually in various ways. Thus at the feast celebrating the end of Ramadam (a yearly fast) it is believed to be a sunna (injunction of the Prophet) that a special ram of the Shehu be killed by the Liman (Chief priest of Bornu). No one considering himself a subject of the Shehu may kill his own ram until the royal ceremony is completed.

644 At all annual festivals and state occasions, and every Friday, to a lesser extent, the Shehu is attended at the palace by representatives of the people. These include the nobility, any DH's who may be in the capital, or their city Wakils, and a representative section of the N.A. departments, a sample of the schoolboy population of the city, and the crafts and trade leaders of the entire city community. A symbolic pledge of loyalty and obedience is made through the saying of prayers for the health and welfare of the monarch and the state. The people, including all the nobles go down on their knees to their monarch, stand when he stands, remove their shoes in his presence, and speak to him only indirectly, using terms of reverence and respect incessantly in their conversation.

643 The question can be posed (but not answered at present) as to the real power and authority of the Shehu in the modern state of
[123] Bornu. The answer would require much more intimacy with the higher coun-
[178] cils of Bornu than was achieved during the field work... However, the writer feels that the monarch is becoming more and more a ritual head as the complexity of the modern state in its internal and external affairs increases. This has been aided and abetted in recent years by the extreme age and blindness of the present Shehu. It was commonly felt among informants around the palace, among DH's, and among many others of